



**West Midlands
Combined Authority**

Transport Delivery Committee

Date	11 July 2022
Report title	Member Engagement Groups Update
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Recommendation(s) for decision:

Transport Delivery Committee is recommended to:

- (1) Approve the appointment to the Lead Member roles for 2022/23.
- (2) Approve the membership of the Member Engagement Groups for 2022/23.
- (3) To note the recent activities of the committee's Member Engagement Groups.

1. Purpose

1.1 To note recent developments and meetings the six Member Engagement Groups.

2. Background

2.1 The introduction of Lead Member Reference Groups occurred in 2017 when it was felt that the formal meetings of this committee did not allow members to get further into detail of a number of transport-related items. Following a subsequent review of the role and remit of the Lead Member Reference Groups, they have been renamed as Member Engagement Groups (MEGs) to give the rest of the WMCA a clearer sense of their purpose, allowing members the opportunity to focus on specific aspects of the work of Transport for West Midlands in the delivery of policies.

2.2 In total there are currently six MEGs:

- Air Quality, Congestion & Environmental Impact
- Finance & Performance
- Putting Passengers First
- Rail & Metro
- Safe & Sustainable Travel
- Sprint

2.3 Each of the MEGs normally meet ahead of each meeting of this committee and are open to all Transport Delivery Committee members to attend.

3. Member Engagement Group Updates

3.1 Each of the MEGs have an assigned lead member associated to them. Given the start of the new municipal year, it will be necessary to reappoint the Lead Members assigned to each MEG.

Air Quality, Congestion & Environmental Impact (vacant)

Finance & Performance (2021/22 - Councillor Pervez Akhtar)

Putting Passengers First (vacant)

Rail & Metro (2021/22 - Councillor Richard Worrall)

Safe & Sustainable Travel (2021/22 - Councillor Bob Grinsell)

Sprint (2021/22 - Councillor Timothy Huxtable)

3.2 Members of the committee are invited to join either one or more of the MEGs, which can then be ratified at this meeting.

- 3.3 An update from Member Engagement Groups is provided below for those groups that met after the last committee.

Rail & Metro (Councillor Richard Worrall)

The Rail and Metro Member Engagement Group meeting was held on 25 April. Attendees received updates from both the Metro operations and capital teams, as well as details of the December 2022 rail timetables and the rapidly changing industrial relations landscape in rail.

Members heard that works were already underway to repair the Midland Metro tram fleet to enable services to resume by the end of May. The works are currently taking place on Wednesbury Depot, but two external locations have been identified. Undertaking works off site will have the advantage of reducing congestion on the Depot itself as once service resumes there will not be the capacity to undertake the repairs and do routine maintenance on trams in service simultaneously. It is planned that some works will also be undertaken by third party staff, overseen by the manufacturer, to accelerate the repairs. The Metro team have taken advantage of the service suspension to undertake some disruptive track renewals and system tests related to the depot extension plans. These would have been difficult to deliver during normal operation, and will mean the tram should be able to run more reliably once the service has resumed. Metro are also examining ways of enticing passengers back on to the network once the line has reopened.

Members received an update on the Metro capital programme. On Westside, the issues with the TRO on Broad Street have been resolved, meaning signing and lining can now commence. Temporary measures are planned for the side streets on Broad Street ahead of a formal TRO consultation to be held after the CWG. Handover for testing and commissioning is expected end of May, although static testing has been underway for a few weeks. Following testing and commissioning, services should commence early July. At Wolverhampton works are progressing well, with relationships between the Metro and NR much improved. The route is expected to open before the CWG, with works finishing in July. Some urban realm works will be completed after the Games. Works on Wednesbury-Brierley Hill remain ongoing, with analysts continuing to review the business case and update it to reflect post COVID changes to demand. Finally, Eastside is being delivered in five phases, with works underway on phase 1 and 5. Both will see an element of public works needing to be completed after the Games.

An update was provided on the current state of industrial relations within the rail industry. On 24/04 the RMT union notified all train companies and Network Rail of its intention to ballot for strike action after it failed to receive the reassurances it was seeking in regards to pay, terms and conditions, pensions and workforce reform. The ballot will commence on 26/04, and conclude on 24/05. The earliest strike action could be held is 07/06. If the ballots return a mandate for strike action, it is possible that for the first time in a generation there will be a national strike, with RMT members across the country refusing to work on the same day(s). ASLEF (who represent train drivers) and TSSA (who represent station staff and control officer personnel) are also concerned about pay and conditions, and may soon ballot their members for strike action. As strike ballots provide a mandate for six months, there is a risk that action could occur during the CWG.

Finally, Members received a summary of the planned December 2022 rail timetables. In something of a first since privatisation these have been developed collaboratively by the rail industry, and have been prompted by; a) the planned introduction of new trains by Avanti West Coast, b) the loss of two platforms at Euston due to HS2 works, and c) the need to

address the inconsistencies in service patterns created by the many ad hoc timetable changes that have occurred during the pandemic. The main changes are on the West Coast Main Line, where the fast trains to London are now better spaced. This has enabled local stations between Coventry and New Street to have a regular half hourly service. The timetable is also future proofed for the introduction of services to the new stations at Darlaston and Willenhall, and also those being constructed on the Camp Hill Line (Moseley, Kings Heath and Hazelwell). The timetables are now with Network Rail for validation.

Air Quality, Congestion & Environmental Impact (Councillor Chaman Lal)

The Air Quality, Congestion and Environmental Impact MEG met on 30 March. The Group considered the Government consultation on new UK air quality targets. The Group felt there needed to be interim targets for milestone years upto 2040, as well as 2040 targets for air quality. The need for land to be allocated in development plans to green spaces and green corridors is an issue that needed to be raised in the WMCA response. The need for the response to stress the importance of cross-boundary working by authorities to improve air quality was also highlighted.

Update on WMCA Environment Team development of a regional air quality framework
WMCA Environment Team is now developing a regional air quality framework. The Group highlighted the need for transport aspects to be fully incorporated into this wider framework which covers all sources of air pollution.

International Case Studies of City Transport Strategies which have improved air quality, and key lessons for the West Midlands

The Group considered a paper on four cities which have been successful in improving air quality from transport sources: Essen – Ruhr, Germany; Bogota, Columbia; Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain; Lisbon, Portugal. The key lessons for the West Midlands were:

1. Joined Up, and Positively Promoted, Strategy for Air Quality, Sustainable Growth and Transport
2. Vision, Long Term Approach and Measures delivered year in, year out
3. Pro-public transport, cycling and walking, with restrictions on traffic and parking
4. Large scale use of green spaces
5. Improved monitoring
6. Promotion of electric vehicles
7. Commitment to Act on the Air Quality Benefits of Lockdowns for short term actions

The EU website with information on EU Green Capital Winners provides useful background information: [Previous Winning cities \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eip/eu-green-capital-winners)

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising out of the recommendations contained within the report.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising out of recommendations contained within the report.

6. Equalities Implications

6.1 There are no equalities implications arising out of the recommendations contained within the report.

7. Inclusive Growth Implications

7.1 There are no inclusive growth implications arising out of the recommendations contained within the report.

8. Geographical Area of Report's Implications

8.1 There are no geographical implications arising out of the recommendations contained within the report.

9. Other Implications

9.1 There are no further specific implications arising out of the recommendations contained within the report.

10. Schedule of Background Papers

10.1 None.